

CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2002

BETTY GETS MARRIED!

Some of you know from our contact at regional leadership events that God brought a new love into my life in the past couple of years. In fact, a few of you suggested I keep you updated on our relationship through *Connections*. Well, here's the latest. I overcame my fear of loving again and got married to David Wieland on Labor Day, 2002. Dr. Alvin

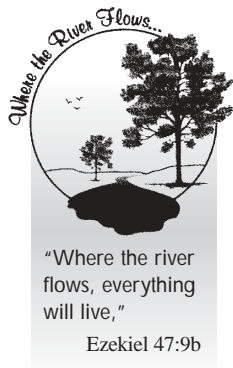


VanderGriend married us in a quiet, deeply meaningful ceremony with a handful of our closest family and friends. I love being married to this delightful man! I am amazed at the miracle of God's forgiving grace and the wonder of committed love. If you'd like to read a little more about our story and see some pictures of the wedding, check out our wedding website, at www.smallgroupministries.org and click on "Contacts." Please rejoice with us.

Betty Veldman Wieland,
Director of Established Church Development

THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE!

Please take two minutes right now to fill out and return the orange postcard. This is your second chance (and final chance) to remain on the *Connections* newsletter mailing list. If you responded the first time and already returned the yellow postcard, thank you! We will continue providing you this free resource. And thank you for your patience as we pare down the mailing list due to budget constraints. Also note that past and current issues of *Connections* are posted on our websites, www.coffeebreakministries.org and www.smallgroupministries.org.



AWESOME CONFERENCE

If you missed the Small Group Evangelism Conference for Women in July, you really did miss out. But here's how you can still benefit.

Go to either website www.coffeebreakministries.org or www.smallgroupministries.org and click on the upper right-hand corner where it says "Conference Information." The actual page address is this: www.coffeebreakministries.org/hmcb_conf.htm. Once you're at the conference front page, do any of the following:

- Go to "2002 in Review" to read Don McCrory's article and see the two incredible women who directed this conference, Lois Hoogeveen and Jayne Termaat.
- Enjoy a few photos—worship, learning and Lucy?
- View the song titles with a link to Colleen and Grace's website.
- Take a look at the schedule, break-outs, speakers and biographies.
- Order audio tapes from www.soundword.com with the link provided. Note that Ray VanderLaan's tapes were only available during the conference.
- Sneak a peak at the next conference, July 23-25, 2004, in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

WHERE THE RIVER FLOWS, EVERYTHING WILL LIVE In Memory of Renee Smith

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Renee Smith claimed this verse in Jeremiah 29:11 not knowing how God's plans would unfold for her and her family.

Renee came to love the Lord deeply through Coffee Break ministries and shared that love with others as she became a Coffee Break leader. In the fall of 2001 Renee started Coffee Break Bible Study for young adults who had not yet claimed Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives. Four months later Renee was diagnosed with plasma cell leukemia.

After the disappointing news that none of her six siblings were a match for a bone marrow transplant, Renee was able to have a stem cell transplant in April of this year. On June 20 the doctors gave Renee the good news, "You are going to live!"

June 27, after spending almost three months in a Minneapolis, Minnesota hospital, Renee returned home to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. By evening she was back in the hospital with a fever. Although the family initially saw this as a minor setback, Renee's health continued to deteriorate. As the women gathered in St. Paul for the Small Group Evangelism Conference for Women—a conference Renee initially helped plan, a conference Renee was planning to attend—Renee lay in the hospital a few miles away, comatose. On Sunday, July 21, 2002, Renee went to

continued



Coffee Break



Small Groups



Story Hour
Little Lambs

continued from front

heaven. She now sees the Lord, seated on the throne and is singing “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord.” The conference banner that depicted the lamb on the throne and the river of life was displayed in the front of the church at Renee’s funeral.

Renee was a radiant, vivacious woman who loved the Lord and loved people. **She is a life that was changed because of the Coffee Break Ministry.** Where the river flows, everything will live!

Lois Hoogveen, Conference Co-director and Small Group Regional Representative, North Central US, Manitoba



“Trust shows itself when it leaves the tip of our tongue and lands on our tennis shoes. We begin to walk our faith, not just talk it.”

Jennifer Rothschild, *Lessons I Learned in the Dark; Steps to Walking by Faith, Not by Sight*, www.JenniferRothschild.com.

WISE OR FOOLISH

Hum along with me. You can do the motions too: “The wise man built his house upon the rock. The wise man built his house upon the rock. The wise man built his house upon the rock, and the rains came tumbling down.” Most of you also know the chorus and the next verse about the foolish man who built his house upon the sand.

But how many of you know the answer to this question: Who is like that wise man? How does Jesus describe the person who gets wisdom? The answer is in Matthew 7:24.

Before telling this parable of the wise and foolish builders Jesus had been talking about how to recognize people by their fruit. In so many words He says we’re not going to approach a thornbush and expect to pick a grape. In the same way we will be able to tell the sheep from the wolves even if the bad guys are camouflaged in sheep’s clothing. Why? Because “by their fruit you will recognize them.” In the tradition of the Hebrews, Jesus draws wonderful pictures for us.

Look at the subheadings in your Bible to see the other subjects Jesus was talking about: ask, seek, knock, don’t judge, don’t worry, fast, pray, give to the needy, love enemies, enter through the narrow gate.



After that He says this: “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a ...” And that’s when He draws the picture for us. If we’re listening, and if we’re then putting what we hear into practice, we are like the wise man who built his house upon a rock.

Who is like the foolish man then? According to verse 26 he’s the guy that hears (or reads) Jesus’s words and does NOT put them into practice.

Big question for us leaders: Are we wise or foolish? Are we hearing Jesus?

Are we even putting ourselves in a position to hear Him? Are we doing what He says? Aren’t these the same questions we’re asking our Coffee Break women? Would you agree that this modeling business, this “practicing what we preach” is not for sissies? We cannot do it in our own strength. We must be in a daily relationship with our God. That is the beginning of wisdom. In fact we’re told to “get wisdom” in Proverbs. Just read the first four chapters. Wisdom is even described as a tree of life.

When we’re listening to Jesus, when we’re doing what He says, when we get wisdom, we will be able to sing that last phrase of the song, “and the house on the rock stood firm.”

Marjo Jordan, Co-Editor

OLD DOG, NEW TRICKS

Training? Surely I’ve had enough. After all, I lead small groups. Enter the Coffee Break Leader Training workshop. In a room of women, eagerly anticipating starting Coffee Break in their church for the first time, I experienced training. *Small group principles* such as support and belonging, learning retention, risk taking, and synergy transpired in the workshop. (Did you know that 50% of what we learn comes from discussion and only 5% from what we hear?) The second module, *Inductive Method*, reaffirmed how vital it is to learn directly from the Word and to ask good questions. *Evangelistic Purpose*, the final module, drew us to the power of prayer and walked us through preparing our testimony.

Believe me, this dog is not too old to learn some new tricks! In fact, the experience today sharpened skills but also fueled new love and appreciation in my heart for God, and the way He uses us as part of the transformation process through a small group ministry such as Coffee Break.

Look over the training schedule on the website, www.smallgroupministries.org, for a location close to you and take a co-leader and friend. You’ll be glad you did!

Diana Klungel, Small Group Program Director

Editor’s Note: We welcome Diana to our team! Learn more about Diana in the article “Hand-Offs and Heart Throbs” in the Small Talk section of this newsletter.



“I am very thankful to the women of Coffee Break for providing a safe place where I can learn and grow.”

Attendee at Westend Fellowship Coffee Break, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.
Submitted by Agnes Bylsma.

A NEW OPPORTUNITY?

- For every ten Americans, two of those ten do not speak English in their home.
- More than five million grandparents live with their grandchildren

WHAT'S GROWING?

In the changing world of children's ministry, I can think of several answers to this question. The most obvious answer is children! We're aware of the tremendous rate of growth between birth and age six. Many wonderful things are going on as the child changes from a helpless infant to a somewhat independent six-year-old. Our perception of children and their role in the kingdom is also growing. As God's agents of ministry to these little ones, we realize not only their future value in God's plan but also the important role they play right now in His kingdom even though they're young. Our work with children impacts them now as well as helps prepare them for the future.

I'm also growing, and hopefully you are too. We continue to learn from the excellent resources we have available to us, as well as from the children we work with. Growth involves change. If little children didn't change as they grow, there would be serious problems. Being a follower of Jesus means that we allow Him to change us too, as we try to become more like Him.

We live in a world that seems to be changing with lightning speed. That can create fear in some of us, especially when we realize that a child knows how to find information on the web more easily than we do. But we don't have to be afraid if we realize that growth and change are healthy. It may mean that we try something new in our teaching.

It may mean that we grow in our knowledge of the young child and the way that they learn. It may mean that we use technology in a new way to prepare or lead our next lesson. As we open ourselves to new possibilities in ministry, we may find that our passion for God and His mission is also growing.

With changes swirling all around us, we can relax in the fact that God's love for us doesn't change, and it never ends. Somehow God continues to give us the ability to love Him and others with ever increasing passion and zeal. Ross Campbell and Gary Campbell in their book, *The Five Love Languages for Children*, say, "We believe a child's need for love is basic to all other needs. Receiving love and learning to give love is the soil out of which all positive human endeavors grow."

Growth – Yes! Change – Yes! All rooted in the soil of God's love. Picture the rose garden (this is a stretch for some of us in the winter).

We see a beautiful variety of colors and kinds. The rosebud and the rose are there together, growing, changing into the fragrant, colorful scene. If

there were just rosebuds, we wouldn't enjoy the fragrance or the color of the full flower. If there were just flowers in full bloom, there would not be the fragile promise of future beauty. Thank God today that we're all growing together into his glorious kingdom! And continue to ask, "How does my garden grow?"

Diane Dykgraaf, Story Hour/Little Lambs Specialist

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

Six-year-old Taylor's great grandmother had died on Sunday, so he had some serious questions about heaven as I drove him to school. "Do people just turn into nothing?" he asked.

"Oh no!" I said. "They get to see Jesus, and all of the people who have died before them."

Taylor thought for a minute. "I'm gonna talk to Isaac," he said. As I wondered if he had a little friend named Isaac, he continued. "I'm gonna ask him what he was thinkin'!" Now my curiosity was piqued. Where was he going with this? Deep in thought he said, "I'm gonna ask him what he was thinkin' when he was laying there on that altar."

Whoa, Taylor! I think I want to be there when you ask him!

Diane Dykgraaf







This past summer at the Small Group Evangelism Conference for Women in St. Paul, Minnesota, teacher Ray Vander Laan challenged us to get into the text of the Bible. Ray has spent much of his life studying the Hebrew roots that we share as believers in Jesus, and the impact that the Jewish culture of the Bible can have on our lives even today. The ongoing challenge is for us to understand and appreciate our Jewish heritage that we share in Jesus.

I wonder how, as twenty-first century Christians working with young children, we can be more accurate in our portrayal of biblical events and characters. For me it will involve an ongoing desire to study the text and the cultural setting in which it was written.

You may want to start by watching *The True Christmas Story* in either video or DVD this Christmas season. This video is filmed in the Holy Land with teacher Ray Vander Laan by the producers of the *That the World May Know* video series of Focus on the Family. It's available from your local Christian bookstore or online at www.zondervan.com.

When we let the story impact us in a new way, we can also impact others. It's an amazing story we have to tell. Let's do our best to be true to its intent.

Try one of the following this Christmas:

-  Portray the stable as a cave in a hillside.
-  Don't put cows or camels in the stable.
-  Use a rock or a stone for a manger, shaped so that you could lay a "baby" inside.
-  Let little girls be the shepherds in the play.

Diane Dykgraaf, Story Hour/
Little Lambs Specialist



Story Hour
Little Lambs

STORY HOUR

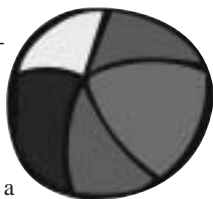
idea share



Coffee Break

"LET'S PLAY BALL!"

Get a soft, small ball, a group of people and you've got a great illustration for your small group leadership and discussion.



- The leader throws a ball back and forth to each member. Repeat this until all members catch the ball. This illustrates a **directive style of leadership**. Throwing represents the leader asking a question. When a group begins and needs direction, consider employing this directive style.
- Next, the leader should throw the ball instructing the member to throw to someone else. The ball travels from member to member, probably in no certain order, making sure no one is left out. This exercise represents **desired group interaction**. The leader facilitates a discussion as a question is

thrown out and "caught" by a member. Other members add comments or questions, building on the learning and social experience, providing lively and interesting discussion. If the discussion gets off track, the leader should ask for the ball back to redirect as he or she throws out another question.

- To teach the members about healthy group discussion, the leader can explain the purpose using the visual example. The ball can surface during the next group, actually passing it each time someone contributes. If a member or leader is dominating the discussion, it will be visually obvious as one person holds the ball for a long time. A lighthearted comment could promote passing the ball. If one person is left out, they may be encouraged to engage. If the leader throws the ball out, and no one takes it, there is also a problem. They can discuss whether this was a problem with the leader's question, or why the group might be holding back.

The ball presents a fun but powerful visual teaching tool. If you utilize it, remember to use humor and exhibit respect for all members, embracing shy and outgoing personalities for effective group interaction.

Some groups so enjoy this that they have decorated their ball and keep it visible. However used, you will create curiosity and interest next time you begin with the announcement, "Let's Play Ball!"



Story Hour Little Lambs

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS OR ROOM FRESHENERS

Ingredients: Store-bought applesauce (not chunky), cinnamon.

Mix equal parts of applesauce and cinnamon, roll out like dough and cut with cookie cutter shapes. Make a hole for ribbon. Allow to dry and harden for 24 hours.

These will make fragrant ornaments or room fresheners, and can be given as gifts.



GIFT IDEAS FOR KIDS

- *Sing-A-Long Praise Songs*, by Jon and Jacquelyn Negus. This is one of the best collections for preschool and early elementary kids. It has fun, original music as well as long-time favorites like *Jesus Loves the Little Children*, *Jesus Loves Me*, and *The B-I-B-L-E*.

It's available from Faith Alive Resources, 1-800-333-8300 or www.FaithAliveResources.org.

- *I Could Sing Of Your Love Forever, Kids* is an excellent collection of twelve modern worship songs for the next generation by Worship Together. This collection is manufactured by the Sparrow Label Group and available at Christian bookstores.



RECYCLED CARDS

Cut the front off a Christmas card. Make sure it is blank on the reverse side. On the blank side draw a line down the center to create a postcard. Using the list of children in your class, make one postcard for each child, writing their address on the right side and a message on the left. The message could be something like, "Hope you had a great Christmas. See you next Tuesday in Story Hour. Love, Mrs. ____."

RESOURCE NOTES

- New! *Discover the Joy of Sharing Jesus* will be available before Christmas. See details under "Resources" in the Small Talk section.
- *Discover 1 & 2 Peter* has been newly revised.
- *Discover Ephesians* will be available in early December.
- *Who in the World Can You Trust?* in the Get Real series is a wonderful entry-level study for small groups.

1-800-333-8300 or shop online at www.FaithAliveResources.org

COFFEE BREAK SKIT

This ten-minute skit written by Melissa Sutter is a great way to promote Coffee Break. Perform this in a church service or in your Coffee Break. The first in this series, *Gabby Hears the Truth*, is available at no charge on our website, www.coffeebreakministries.org, under "Resources."

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

A one-hour ladies' Christmas program, "Making it Perfect," includes a skit and a craft idea. Thank you to Melissa Sutter of Casnovia Baptist Church in Michigan who has made this program available to us free of charge. Go to www.coffeebreakministries.org and click on "Resources."

WWWJW

What Would Jesus Want? What gift could you give to The Giver? What would Jesus want from you for Christmas? Have group members wrap an item to represent what she would want to give to The Giver. This would be a good indicator of where your group members and your leaders are on their spiritual journey.

GIFT IDEAS



Looking for Christmas gifts for your leaders or members? *Coffee Break: Touching Lives with Love* is a beautiful devotional about changed lives (\$9.95^{US}/14.45^{CDN}). The devotionals *Sister Stories* and *Daffodils in the Bathtub* are now on sale (\$3.00^{US}/4.35^{CDN}). Call 1-800-333-8300.

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2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560
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e-mail: jordanm@crna.org
www.smallgroupministries.org
www.coffeebreakministries.org

"California Good-byes" continued

groups in their church structure. She validated the gifts of Hispanic women, and helped open the door to a more inclusive way of incorporating small groups into Hispanic congregations.

Other family priorities called her away from her work in this ministry. We thank God for her passion for her work and the ways He used Sonia's gifts to open the door to building authentic community and reaching seekers through Sobremesa small groups.

Betty Veldman Wieland, Director of Established Church Development

we need. In advertising for Jane Voss's replacement, He surprised us by supplying two reps—not twins, but bonus fruit! We're excited to introduce our newest small group regional representatives: Danell Czarniecki and

Marti Palmer. God brought Danell to faith through Coffee Break. As you can imagine, her passion for this ministry overflows. She will represent southern California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Marti's area includes northern and north central California. Marti's first language, of her native Cuba, is Spanish. (Palmer might not sound Spanish, but Marti's heritage is!) In addition to small groups and Coffee Break, her activities include growing Sobremesa and Spanish small group ministries. She has experience in small groups as a Stephen Minister trainer and spiritual director.

Danell and Marti share a deep love for God's obsession, the lost, and they bring enthusiasm, experience, and excitement to the mix in this new endeavor. They long to serve you

and provide assistance as you grow your ministries. Please join us in welcoming them. E-mail Marti at vcnapa@aol.com or write or call 3305 Brittany Circle, Napa CA, 94558, 707-257-8075. Contact Danell at 6629 Manzano Street, Chino, CA 91710, 909-393-7774, or e-mail danellcz@direcway.com.



Marti Palmer



BING CHERRY BONUSES

Two New California Reps

I grew up with a family tradition of fresh fruit boxes each summer. Especially sweet Bing cherries topped our "favorites" list. Fights broke out over twin cherries—you know, the ones connected at the top. Triples provoked more battle. We delighted in the bonus fruit. God creates such surprises. He also knows what



Danell Czarniecki

"How's Your Group?" continued

and look at "their garden"—to simply observe it. Ask what is happening. Which plants need watering or fertilizing? Which ones need pruning?

When assessing the health of your small group, focus on each member. Where are they in each of the following categories?

- 1. Aches and Pains**
Does this person have a special need for care and support at this time?
- 2. Seasons of Life**
Where is this person in her or his life circumstances?
- 3. Season of Faith**
Where is this person in his or her faith journey and development as a disciple?
- 4. Environmental Factors**
What is going on around this person?
- 5. Distinctive Attributes**
What are some of the gifts, talents, and passions I see in this person?

Stark says this review of the individual helps the small group leader to understand and be sensitive to the needs of each member. It also allows for an appreciation of the amazing diversity of the group.

And then there's one more important question for the leader to remember: "Who grows the garden?" Is it not God? Small group leaders are not responsible for growing the group. That's God's job. He is already growing individual members as well as the whole group. The leader's job is to listen, to discern, to participate with the Holy Spirit and then to create the atmosphere in which growth can happen.

God grows the garden. Leaders just need to figure out what He's doing in the garden.

Diana Klungel, Small Group Program Director

Marjo Jordan, Co-Editor



Small Groups

RESOURCES Available through Faith Alive Resources, 1-800-333-8300, www.FaithAliveResources.org

LAUNCH AND LEAD YOUR OWN SMALL GROUP

A Principle-Based Approach

David Stark

This book helps leaders create an effective small group. By working through this book, leaders will learn principles of small group ministry, types of small groups, small group dynamics, how to be an effective leader, how to design, launch, and manage small groups. Order one book for each small group leader in your church.

#216761 \$17.00^{US}/24.65^{CDN}

DISCOVER THE JOY OF SHARING JESUS

Motivate and train your small group members to discover the joy of sharing Jesus with others. (4 lessons)
Study Guide #152630CT \$3.35^{US}/4.85^{CDN}
Leader's Guide #152635CT \$4.50^{US}/6.50^{CDN}

FAITH LESSONS ON THE EARLY CHURCH

Ray Vander Laan

Filmed in Israel and Turkey, includes two videos, a leader's guide and a

participant's guide. "Very good for small groups. Evangelistic."

#162250CT \$79.99^{US}/116.00^{CDN}

THE CORE VALUES SERIES

These booklets offer practical tips and inspiration for keeping your small groups focused on evangelism. At only \$3.25^{US}/4.70^{CDN} you'll want to buy the whole set.

- Leading with Love #152052CT
- Linking to the Church #152053CT
- Linking to the Lost #152054CT
- The Priority of Prayer #152050CT
- Little Ones Need Jesus #152051CT

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SMALL TALK

FOR SMALL GROUPS

WINTER 2002

HAND-OFFS AND HEART THROBS

Diana Klungel joined the Home Missions staff as the Small Group Program Director on the first day of the Small Group Evangelism Conference in July. She came to work with her suitcase packed for a trip to St. Paul. What a wild, wonderful introduction to the work God was preparing her to do! She sat at the feet of Ray VanderLaan with the rest of us, worshiped joyously with Colleen and Grace, and took frantic notes from Dave Stark and other gifted breakout speakers. She was also enthusiastically embraced by a cadre of small group representatives whose work she would coordinate and eventually provide the vision for.



Diana Klungel

Diana is no stranger to small groups. She served on a large church staff where small groups was the primary focus of her responsibilities. She comes with a heart for the lost, a commitment to strive for authentic community, and a love for people and sensitivity to their needs that radiates from her presence. Her smile is contagious. She exudes warmth and has a knack for making people feel at ease. We celebrate the gift she is for the present and the future of small groups and Coffee Break. As I write this, she's sipping coffee and experiencing Coffee Break firsthand. She's embracing the new challenges of her position with energy and enthusiasm. It's fun to hand-off the work to her and see God in the process.

I will continue to provide vision and support for small groups too, but in a broader arena and with a new title and a new name. In April I was appointed as the director of established church development. In that role, I will hold the small groups banner high. I am passionate about Coffee Break as a way to reach the lost

and nurture faith in Jesus through inductive Bible study. I have experienced authentic community in a small group and long for others to experience it too. I am blessed in working with others to carry out the work to which God calls us—scatter seeds, water them, and watch God make them grow.

I also have a new name. On September 2, 2002 in the company of a few close friends and family, my new husband, David, and I committed our lives to one another before God. Change and growth in our lives do not come without pain, but in His time, God as the Master Gardener makes all things flourish. May He be praised forever!

Betty Veldman Wieland,
Director of Established Church Development

HOW'S YOUR GROUP?

How Does Your Garden Grow?

I planted an unusual garden between the peony bushes that line the driveway. I didn't know it was so unusual at the time I planted, but I was in for some surprises. Plants labeled "summer squash" produced pickles. And the predicted zucchini turned into rock-hard acorn squash. Only the tomatoes lived up to their billing, but if not monitored, I would have missed the opportunity to get a cage around them and to later stake the ones that were nearly tipping over.

Small groups are like gardens. Dave Stark draws this analogy from his past greenhouse experience. Gardens grow. Gardens change. So do small groups. Stark tells small group leaders to step back



Small Groups

CALIFORNIA GOOD-BYES

Jane Voss has loved Coffee Break ministries and small groups for a long time. I first met her when she had accepted the challenge of chairing the 1990 Coffee Break/Story Hour Convention in Long Beach, California. That was the beginning of a wonderful friendship and ministry partnership. Jane brought passion and excellence to her leadership. She loved the women and churches she worked with. In her final years of ministry, following some personal health issues, she rediscovered the importance of making God first in her life. As she put it, "I am learning that God does not want even my best ministry activities if those take the place of sitting and listening at Jesus' feet." That became her legacy, along with Coffee Break/Story Hour ministries that are challenged to reach lost people and churches that are nudged toward authentic community in small groups. Jane has moved to the Chicago area with her husband, Andy, where she continues to nurture her walk with God, and her relationship with twin grandsons, Justin and Tyler.

Sonia Alvarez first became acquainted with Coffee Break in an English-speaking context, and her passion for reaching Hispanic women led to her becoming our very first Hispanic Small Group Representative. She pioneered our Spanish version of Coffee Break, called Sobremesa, and was instrumental in getting Hispanic church leaders to consider the importance of principle-based small

SMALL GROUPS

continued

continued